

Amendments to the Specification

Please make the following corrections to the text beginning on page 18, entitled "Artificial Christmas Tree," through the end of the detailed description on page 23.

ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

With further reference to the drawings, an artificial Christmas tree of the present invention is shown therein and indicated generally by the numeral 200. See Figures 11-~~[[13]]~~12. Artificial Christmas tree 200 includes a generally vertical hollow trunk or stem indicated generally by the numeral 212 and a series of branches 216 secured to or extending from the trunk 212. In the context of this application, the term "artificial" simply means non-living. Thus, the artificial Christmas tree can be made of various materials such as plastic, metal, synthetic materials or could comprise dried Christmas trees or dried vegetation.

As shown in the drawings, the trunk 212 is hollow. Trunk 212 includes a surrounding wall structure 214 and includes a lower portion 214A and an upper portion 214B. As seen in the drawings, the lower portion 214A of the Christmas tree 212 is adapted to be supported by a base 220. That is, the Christmas tree 200 can be inserted into the base and supported in an upright manner. Base 220 may comprise an open top box or container and support materials such as Styrofoam, potting soil, dirt or other supporting structure. Alternatively, the lower portion 214A of the trunk may be formed into a bulb shape.

It is noted that the upper portion 214B of the trunk 212 extends above the uppermost branches 216. The upper end of the trunk may be open or partially closed. In the embodiments illustrated herein, the upper end of the trunk 212 includes a rounded end provided with a series of openings therein. As will be described subsequently herein, the trunk 212 is designed such that air and a fragrance can move upwardly through the same, and in at least ~~on one~~one embodiment, is designed such that a fragrance can be emitted or dispersed from the upper portion 214B of the trunk into an environment where the artificial Christmas tree 200 resides.

Also, it is appreciated that the wall structure 214 of the trunk 212 may include one or more openings 214C selectively placed along the length of the trunk. Again, as will be appreciated from subsequent portions of this disclosure, openings 214C within the trunk may permit air to enter the trunk 212 and move upwardly through the hollow trunk.

The Christmas tree branches 216 are disposed along the length of the trunk. Branches 216 form a part of the overall Christmas tree 200. It is appreciated that the branches 216 may be secured or integrally formed with the trunk 212 through various manufacturing and fabrication techniques. Branches 216 may also assume various shapes and configurations. In some embodiments, each branch would include a supporting structure that extends outwardly from the trunk 212 and an array of stem or sub branches having artificial Christmas tree like needles thereon.

The present invention also entails associating a fragrance source indicated generally by the numeral 222-20 with the Christmas tree 200 for dispersing a fragrance into the environment. The fragrance source 222-20 can be of various conventional types. Further, the particular scent emitted by the fragrance source 222-20 may vary and may be selected to simulate or mimic the smell or scent of various types of Christmas trees. The size of the fragrance source 222-20 and/or the size of the air intake openings 14C and/or outlet openings 214C formed in the Christmas tree 200 may affect the intensity of the fragrance dispersed into the environment.

Various structures, systems and methods can be employed for dispersing the fragrance from the artificial Christmas tree 200. These have been disclosed in the parent applications: U.S. patent application serial no. 10/164,818, filed June 7, 2002 and entitled "Artificial Flower," and U.S. patent application serial no. 10/756,224 filed January 13, 2004 and entitled "Artificial Flower." These disclosures are expressly incorporated herein by reference. In these applications, various artificial flowers have been disclosed and wherein the artificial flowers are provided with means for emitting a fragrance. Various types of fragrance delivery systems have been disclosed in connection with these artificial flowers. The same fragrance delivery systems

are applicable to the artificial Christmas tree 200 of the present invention and therefore details of such will not be dealt with herein. However, as discussed in the two patent applications incorporated herein, the fragrance source 20 may assume various forms including a liquid, a gas or a solid. Also, a fan can be incorporated into the system for moving air past the fragrance and through the artificial tree 200. Further, as discussed in the case of the Artificial Flower, a source of heat may be utilized in conjunction with the fragrance source 20 to facilitate the emission of the fragrance from the fragrance source 20.

In addition, as disclosed with respect to the Artificial Flower, the fragrance source 20 may be positioned at various locations with respect to the Christmas tree 200. The fragrance source 20 may be contained in a container which may preferably be disposed adjacent the Christmas tree and provided with communication or conduit means for channeling the fragrance from the container to the Christmas tree. In addition, the fragrance source can be stationed in the Christmas tree itself, again at various locations in the trunk 212, for example.

In the embodiment illustrated herein, the fragrance-laden air generally passes upwardly through the trunk 212 of the Christmas tree. It is appreciated, however, that the branches 216 may be provided with conduits or air passageways that would communicatively connect to the trunk 212. This would permit the fragrance – air mixture to be directed not only upwardly through the trunk 212, but through the branches 216 as well. The conduits or air passageways in the branches 216 would be provided with outlets to enable the fragrance – air mixture to be emitted there from.

In this regard, reference is made to Figure 12. Figure 12 is a fragmentary view illustrating one example of how detachable branches 216 could be connected to the trunk 212. Further, Figure 12 shows an example of how the air-fragrance mixture could be directed through and out the branches 216. It is to be appreciated that this is simply one example of how the branches 216 could be structured and connected to the trunk 212. There are other ways of accomplishing the same. In any event, in the embodiment illustrated in Figure 12, the trunk 212

includes a series of openings 214C. There is provided a series of branches 216A that can be inserted into the openings within the trunk 212. These branches 216A may include sub-branches or extensions 216B. Further, note that the branch segments 216A include an elongated opening passing from end to end. This permits the air-fragrance mixture passing through the trunk 212 to actually pass through the branch segments 216A. Further, the branch segments 216A include smaller side ports for allowing the air-fragrance mixture to be emitted therefrom.

As noted above, there are various ways to direct the air-fragrance mixture through the artificial Christmas tree 200. One particular way is similar to that shown in Figure 6 with respect to the artificial flower. An example of that type of application is shown in Figure 12. Note that the Christmas tree 200 is set within a pot or container 92220. Disposed within the pot or the container is a compartment or receptacle 88 that includes the fragrance source 20 and a number of air inlet openings 14C. A fan 64 is associated with the box 88 and is powered by power source 74 having a switch 76. In this particular example, air is pulled in through inlets 14C and passed over the fragrance source 20. As air passes over the fragrance source 20, the fragrance mixes with the air to form an air-fragrance mixture. This mixture is channeled through openings within the fan housing 64. From there the fan directs the air-fragrance mixture up through the trunk 212 of the artificial Christmas tree 200.

From the foregoing specification and discussion, it is appreciated that the artificial Christmas tree of the present invention has the advantage of emitting a fragrance or scent that simulates or mimics a live Christmas tree.

The present invention may, of course, be carried out in other specific ways than those herein set forth without departing from the scope and the essential characteristics of the invention. The present embodiments are therefore to be construed in all aspects as illustrative and not restrictive and all changes coming within the meaning and equivalency range of the appended claims are intended to be embraced therein.